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ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AFRICA

edited by

DARYLL FORDE

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EAST CENTRAL AFRICA

PART IV

THE NILOTES OF THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN
SUDAN AND UGANDA

by

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[p1]

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ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AFRICA

PREFACE

12/ The preparation of a comprehensive survey of the tribal societies of Africa was discussed by the Executive Council of the Institute as far back as 1917, but the interruption and restriction of its activities caused by the war resulted in the postponement of the project. Events and developments during recent years, however, have led to a wider recognition of the need for collecting and making more generally available the wealth of existing but uncoordinated material on the ethnic groupings and social conditions of African peoples, particularly in connection with plans for economic and social development. Moreover, it appeared that the International African Institute, as an international body which has received support from and performed services for the different Colonial Governments, was in a very favorable situation for undertaking such a task.

12/ The Institute, therefore, in 1944 worked out a scheme for the preparation of an Ethnographic Survey of Africa. A committee, under the chairmanship of Professor Haden-Guest, was appointed to consider the scope and form of the Survey (the Editor's name appears on each volume) and collaboration was established with research institutions in South Africa, Rhodesia, East Africa, French West Africa, Belgium and the Belgian Congo. In addition to a grant from the British Colonial Development and Fairtrade Fund, awarded on the recommendation of the Colonial Science Research Council, the Institute has received a grant from the Government of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan to assist in the preparation and publication of sections relevant to that territory, and this assistance is gratefully acknowledged in connection with the present study.

12/ The aim of the Ethnographic Survey is to present a concise, critical, and accurate account of our present knowledge of the tribal groupings, distribution, physical environment, social conditions, political and economic structure, religious beliefs and cult practices, technology and art of the African peoples. The material is to be presented as briefly and as consistent a plan as possible, and the text will be supplemented by maps and comprehensive bibliographies.

12/ The Ethnographic Survey is being published as a series of separate, self-contained studies, each devoted to one particular people or cluster of peoples. It is hoped that publication in this form will make the results more quickly and readily available to those interested in specific areas or groups. A list of the sections which have already appeared is given on the cover of this volume.

12/ Since the material is to be presented in a concise and critical manner, it will be obvious that the material here presented can make no claim to be complete or definitive. Every effort has been made, however, to ascertain all available literature and to check it by reference to unpublished sources and to workers actually in the field; that it is

[p. 11]

121 intended to present a clear picture of our existing knowledge and to point
127 out the directions in which the need for further studies is most pressing.
Any assistance from those who are in a position to remedy deficiencies and
correct inaccuracies by providing supplementary material will be greatly
appreciated.

000 The International African Institute expresses its thanks to the many
scholars, research workers, administrative officers and missionaries in
Europe and Africa who have generously responded to our requests for infor-
mation, and who have spared time to correct and supplement drafts. Per-
sonal communications are acknowledged in footnotes. Our thanks are
especially due to Professor Evans-Pritchard for assistance in supervising
the work on this section of the Survey and for providing the bibliography
of the Nilotes.

DANIEL PETER,
Director.

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Acknowledgments

Ethnological and social anthropological studies in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and in East Africa generally have been built up over the last fifty years by a number of eminent scholars and contributors from other professions. In writing this survey I have been greatly indebted to them all. In particular, I wish to thank Professor E.E. Evans-Fritchard under whose guidance this survey has been written, and whose numerous and excellent studies of the Nilotic peoples have been freely drawn upon. His bibliography of the most important works on the Nilotes is here published for the first time. I also wish to thank Miss. Stone, Mr. Grunemann and Mr. James-Smith for advance information on official population figures and for other unpublished material incorporated in this study.

Anthony Butt.

[p iv]

2

CONTENTS

PART I. GENERAL

300	LOCATION, POPULATION AND NOMINATIONS	Page 1
	Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Anuk, Acholi, Lango, Luo, Dorze, Bar Elanda, Jo Luo (Jor), Shilluk Luo tribes of the Sahr el Ghazal, Pari, Alur, Jo Padula and Jo Palen.	
	THE NILEOTIC LANGUAGES	13
	THE NILEOTIC PHYSICAL TYPE	16
	HISTORY	18
	ADVANCES OF MODERN DEVELOPMENT RELATING TO THE NORTHERN NIGER Government, missions, schools, medical services.	20
	TRADITIONS AND MYTHS OF THE RELATIONS AMONG NILEOTIC TRIBAL GROUPS	23
	DEATH, ORNAMENTATION AND TRIBAL NAMES	26
	PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT Soil, climate and vegetation.	29
	MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY Cattle, cultivation of the soil, horticultural year, production of food, hunting, fishing and collecting, simple foods, division of labour and economic co- operation, crafts, trade.	31
	THE CHARACTER OF THE NILEOTIC PEOPLES	41
	CONCLUSION	42

PART II. THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES OF THE NILEOTES

	THE SHILLUK	
	GENERAL	45
	SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE Territorial divisions and kinship units, central and local organization, legal procedure, the ritual significance of the rite, the election and installation of the rite, age sets, class and lineage, inheritance, marriage, kinship and kinship terminology.	46

[p. 4]

200

THE SWILLER: (Contd.)	Page
RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES ...	62
Juk, the cult of Nyikang, the cult of the ancestors, totemic beliefs, magical practices, life cycle.	
THE ANDAK	
ETHNOLOGICAL CONDITIONS ...	67
SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE ...	68
Clans and lineages, the village and the lineage system, the village headmanship, the nobles, the transmission of the royal emblem, the area of nobility, the relationship between the area of kingship and the area of headmanship, the position of the holder of the emblem, age sets, marriage.	
RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES ...	79
Juk, totem of the nobles, divination.	
LIFE CYCLE ...	80
THE ACHOLI	
SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE ...	81
Territorial divisions, kinship units, royal lineage, common lineage, the S, the root, other official positions, marriage, age sets, inheritance.	
RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES ...	86
Language, the job, the ancestral cult, palm-walking, the ejaka.	
LIFE CYCLE ...	91
THE LANGO	
SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE ...	92
The village, the village headman, the root, the twin lot, inter-village war and feud, age sets, clans and lineages, the po daggala, inheritance, marriage, kinship.	
RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES ...	100
The crop groups, the Lango concept of Juk, the ancestral cult, the ejaka.	
LIFE CYCLE ...	107

[p. vi]

THE LID OF KENYA							Page
GENERAL ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100 000
SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	109
The tribe, clans and lineages, important men among the law, ritual experts, the law husband, inheritance, marriage.							
RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	115
Religious beliefs, ancestral spirits, rain-making, witchcraft.							
LIFE CYCLE ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	127
THE DIMLA							
GENERAL ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	138
ETHNOLOGICAL ORIGINATIONS ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	138
SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	139
Territorial units, the tribe, kinship units, the spear-chief, legal procedure, age sets, marriage, inheritance, kinship terminology.							
RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	139
Totemism, ancestral spirits, ritual officials, ceremony.							
LIFE CYCLE ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	139
THE NUER							
ETHNOLOGICAL ORIGINATIONS ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	134
RELIGION ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	136
The importance of cattle.							
SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	136
Social units, tribal characteristics, territorial segments, the settlement of a blood feud, hostility between the Nuer and Dinka, the status of law among the Nuer, recognized social figures among the Nuer, the relationship between Nuer tribal segments and the lineage system, differentiation of status among the Nuer, Nuer names, age set organization, marriage.							
RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	132
Totemism, the concepts of stock and owner, curses and ghostly vengeance, ritual persons.							
LIFE CYCLE ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	137
THE BUKUR							
GENERAL - Social life - general customs of life ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	138

Cp vii]

000

THE SUBIN (Cont.)	Page
The Subin of the South - general customs - ritual	100
The Subin - general customs - ritual	100
The Northern Subin - general customs - ritual	101
The Subin - organization - general customs - ritual	102
 THE SUBIN BELANDA	
THE DIVISION OF THE SUBIN BELANDA	103
REVIEW	104
 THE LIG TRIBES OF THE BAHU EL CHAZAL	
THE LIG	105
General customs	
THE SUBIN LIG	105
The Northern Subin LIG - the Southern Subin LIG	
THE ALI LIG	107
Tribal sections and clans - legal procedure - age organization - marriage - ritual - life cycle	
 THE ALI	
GENERAL	116
GENERAL REVIEW	116
GENERAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE	116
The village, the relations between the kinship system and territorial groups, the chief, legal aspects of Ali society, the family, marriage	
OTHER AND OTHER CULTURAL MATTERS	117
Spk, the ancestral cult, magical practices	
LIFE CYCLE	118
 CONCLUSION	118
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	120
 MAP OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE MELIOTIC TRIBAL GROUPS	

(p. 114)

Part I

GENERAL

The designation 'Niliotic' has, for a great number of years, been applied indiscriminately by explorers, traders, government officials and missionaries to all those peoples who live in the Upper Nile Valley, along the banks and in close vicinity to the great river and its tributaries.

As with most old terms, applied in the first instance to little-known areas and people, it later became necessary to refine and limit its scope. The term Niliotic has come to have a specialized meaning for anthropologists. It refers only to certain groups of people in the Nile valley - and to some further south in Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika - who have closely related physical, linguistic and other cultural characteristics as well as traditions and myths suggesting common origin. It is these features, together with certain characteristic types of social structure and organization, which have led anthropologists to feel themselves justified in including all such groups under one common title - 'Niliotic' - and to recognize the Niliotic peoples as a unique ethnic group. Other groups of people living in the same area have been greatly affected by the Nilotes, through intermarriage, warfare, and constant borrowing one way or the other of ideas, and sometimes intimate contact. In turn, the Nilotes have been greatly modified, physically, linguistically and culturally, by their neighbors and in several cases it has been difficult to determine, often with the slightest and most inadequate ethnographic material, whether a certain group of people should be assigned to the Niliotic peoples or to some other ethnic group, such as the Nilo-Saharan peoples of East Africa.

The classification of the better known tribes of the Upper Nile basin is still controversial, even where language has been acknowledged as the chief criterion of affinity to one or another ethnic group. It may be that some groups will come to be classified with certainty owing to extensive sampling with neighbors. In other cases further research will determine the position they most closely resemble. For the purpose of this survey only those which can be classified with certainty, and for which we possess adequate information for comparative purposes, will be considered in full.

LOCATION, POPULATION AND
NOMENCLATURE

The Niliotic tribal groups are contained approximately within the limits of Lat. 12°N. - Lat. 4°N. and Long. 24°E. - Long. 32°E. The southern half of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan is the present homeland of the majority of the Nilotes, who are found in the Provinces of Darfur, Kordofan, White Nile, Fung, Upper Nile, Sudd al Ghazal and Equatoria. Certain Niliotic groups, however, are situated in the western borderland areas of Abyssinia, in the northern regions of Uganda, and in Eastern Kenya, while in two instances they overlap into the Belgian Congo and Tanganyika. The

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Nilotes do not occupy one continuous stretch of territory. In the north there is the block consisting of the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk and Anukh; separated from these are the Fari, Surun-speaking people, Avest and scattered groups of the Bahr el Ghazal. The central Nilotes (Acholi, Lango, Alor and Jo-Paluo) are separated from the northern block by Sudanic and Nilo-Saharan peoples, and the southernmost Nilotic groups are further separated from each other and from the central block by Nilo-Saharan and Bantu. At a broad estimate they number about two and a half millions.

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A more detailed account of the location, population, nomenclature and neighboring tribes of the Nilotic groups follows the list of tribal groups given below:

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Dinka | 4. Lango | 11. Shilluk Luo tribes of |
| 2. Nuer | 7. Luo | the Bahr el Ghazal |
| 3. Shilluk | 8. Surun | 12. Fari |
| 6. Anukh | 9. The Bar Salama | 13. Alor (a) Jo-Palua |
| 5. Acholi | 10. Jo Luo (Jor) | (b) Jo-Paluo |

The official population figures given below are in many cases only approximations owing to the difficulties of carrying out an adequate census in remote and often inaccessible areas.

THE DINKA

LOCATION

The Dinka extend over a vast area from 12° - 4°N. Lat., from Sudd to the north to Khartoum and Juba in the south, only about 100 miles from the Uganda border. There is a wide extension to the west so that the people occupy much of the Bahr el Ghazal province and also the most southern part of Kordofan province, immediately north of the Bahr el Jebel river. There is a long intervening wedge of Nuer about the Bahr el Ghazal, Bahr el Jebel and main Nile rivers. The Dinka tribes are usually divided into geographical sections as follows:-(1)

(a) The Northern Dinka, situated mainly in the Upper Nile Province; they extend south to the Bahr el Jebel, Lake Nj and the Bahr el Ghazal. The main Dinka tribes inhabiting this area are known as the Fading Dinka.

(b) The Eastern Dinka, situated on the right bank of the Nile from south west of Ator to Khartoum.

(c) The Central Dinka, inhabiting the area on the left bank of the Nile, extending west to Taji.

(d) The Western Dinka, situated west of the Nuer about the Jor river area from Taji in the north and the Bahr el Jebel in the south and westwards of Ator. This area is inhabited by the Shilluk Dinka and other lesser tribes. In addition the Nuer live in the country along the Jor river between the rivers Jor and Lel. The Nuer are Jo Luo people who speak

(1) Speke and Selous, *Distribution of the Nilotic and Nilo-Saharan Languages*, 1906, p. 1.

refuge among the Western Dinka to avoid the Arab slave raids and, later, the conflict between the Dinka and Anaks. They are rapidly being absorbed by the Dinka and are consequently losing their Jo Luo customs and dialect. They are said to number 1,000 - 2,000 souls approximately.

NEIGHBORS

The neighbors of the Dinka include the Nuer. There has been conflict between the two for a long time and relations have been predominantly hostile and marked by intermittent cattle raiding. In the north east the Dinka are in contact with the Shilluk while, in the south east, in the Bahr el Ghazal province, there is the confusion of tribes in the neighborhood of Wau. Among the Wau district tribes there is the Niharia Jo Luo (Jui) who have been in immediate contact with their Dinka neighbors for a number of generations and have been subservient to them to a certain extent.

POPULATION

Total population has been estimated at 200,000 souls approximately.

ORIGIN/LEGEND

The Dinka came for themselves is Jui. Dinka is believed to be the anglicized form of the Arabic *Dakani*, from Jui.

THE RIVER

LOCATION

The Nuer inhabit the swampy stretching on both sides of the Nile south of its junction with the Sobat and Bahr el Ghazal rivers and on both banks of the two tributaries. The Nile divides the Nuer country into two parts, Eastern and Western Nuerland. According to Evans-Pritchard the most important tribal groups of the Western Nuer are: the Bai, Japti, Lok, Nung and Dik. The most important tribes of the Eastern Nuer are: the Dikang, Lok, Gauri and Lok.⁽¹⁾ The Jolany tribes are found on the east bank of the Nile and also far to the east of the Sobat river where they extend over the Anglo-Egyptian border into Abyssinia.

NEIGHBORS

The western parts of Nuerland are in direct contact, and usually conflict, with their Dinka neighbors. Many expeditions have been at the expense of their Dinka neighbors and it is generally recognized that much of present day Nuer country was Dinka in the middle of the 19th century. Relations between Nuer and Dinka will be discussed in the account of the Nuer political structure. The Shilluk are separated from the Nuer by the Sobat, except in a small area, and there has been little contact between the two groups, perhaps owing to the more highly organized society of the Shilluk which renders them difficult to raid with impunity. The Nuer give the

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940, p. 4 (map).

- 721 reason that the Shilluk have no cattle and they only raid people with cattle.⁽¹⁾ Although in direct contact with the Nuer in the far eastern parts of Nuer territory, tsetse fly and absence of cattle make the area unsuitable for encroachment and the Nuer were only occasionally raided by the Nuer. When villas were introduced and the Nuer could defend themselves they retaliated with raids on the Nuer. The Nuer were occasionally raided by the Nuer for captives. Other communities, Arab and those of the Nuba mountains, were raided only occasionally. Except for the Nuer whom the Nuer appear to have respected, and the Shilluk whom they fought, most foreign peoples were claimed by the Nuer as *far*, that is, cattle-less folk, or people possessing few cattle. Another category was *far*, cattle-less people whom the Nuer regarded as living on the outskirts of their world; these included the Arabs, Europeans, and the Dingo etc., although the Nuer have differentiating terms for most of them.

POPULATION

- 161 Official estimates of population is 205,000. Estimates for the
619 various tribes are given approximately as follows by Evans-Pritchard.⁽²⁾

THE EASTERN NUER

The Sudd Nuer				The Great Nuer		
Ga'ak	Gomang	Ga'ak	Lot	Lab	Wiang	Gomang
40,000	7,000	40,000	25,000	20,000	9,000	20,000

THE WESTERN NUER

Gal	Lot	2 Western tribes Totals	2 tribes Totals	Gal	Wiang
27,000	15,000	15,000	20,000	15,000	9,000

NOMINATIONS

- 101 The Nuer call themselves Nuer, (sing. *Nuer*). The Shilluk, Arabs and
Shilluk call them Nuer. The Nuer also speak of the tribes west of the Nile as *Jalul* or *far* (sing. - "the foreign Nuer"), and of those east of the river as *far* (sing. - "Nuer Nuer").⁽³⁾

THE ARAB

- 000 Arab appears to be a Nuer tribe, speaking a Nuer dialect, but having adopted many Shilluk habits. They are situated in the Lake district west west of Tivoli, north of the Nile; they number 25,000 approximately. Little is known of them.

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940, p. 100.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 100.

(3) *Ibid.*, Page 100 of the *Shilluk* tribe, 1940, p. 100.

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mother observes certain taboos. Usually the first-born child is delivered to the home of the maternal grandparents and, when strong enough, is taken to the father's home.

Twins are believed to be a manifestation of Spanish. If they are both boys, it is said that they will desire their mother's death; if girls they will desire their father's death; but if one is a girl and the other a boy, each will desire one parent and so both mother and father are safe from their ill-will. After the birth of twins, prayers are made to Spanish and a bull calf is sacrificed.

DEATH

Death is followed by immediate burial. The body is placed in the position of sleep, being curled up on its side facing eastwards. Skins are placed above and below it. The place of burial is on the right-hand side of the doorway of the house inhabited in life. The head of a house-hold man, however, is buried near his father's burial place or in his own cattle pen.¹³¹ The two are buried in the cattle enclosure. Except for 'bull tombs', graves are not marked.

For four days the brothers and the father of the deceased sit around the grave and sleep there; during this time they are not allowed to drink milk or to go near the cows. At the end of this period they wash, and food taboos are over. After the death of an important man, the head of a lineage, the warriors make such raids upon their neighbors 'to find the man who killed him' and to raid any cattle.

The Burial

The burial is a particular kind of shrine which resembles the front half of a bull. It is made of mud and has real horns inserted. One of these shrines are surrounded by a fence and all have pigs near them to which cattle may be tied, to delight the ancestors when the shrine is repaired each year after the rains, and sacrifice is made. Bull tombs are not common. They are built a few days after death in the compound near the grave. Offerings of milk, beer and food are made there, rather than on the grave itself. If the lineage owner, the descendants may build a cairn in the new settlement. It is not at all clear who is entitled to build these shrines but among the Gikis of the Sibir of Ghazal they are made for departed spear-chiefs.

THE AGES¹³²

ETHNOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

135

The River indicates the marches and boundaries which stretch from either side of the Nile south of the point where it is joined by the Sobat and Sobat of Ghazal tributaries. These regions have all the most serious

¹³¹ Gellgren, *Peoples of the African Sahel*, 1911, p. 101.

¹³² Professor Franz Praeger has published a number of full length studies of different aspects of these people, particularly of those are given in the last paragraph. The present article attempts only a summary sketch of the material collected.

features characteristic of the areas occupied by the majority of the
 Nilotes - flatness, heavy clay soil, thick, tall grasses, swamp in the wet
 season and parched, brown stubble in the dry season. It is an area of
 true savannah.

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The influence of environment on Nuer economy is profound. Although
 cattle form the great interest of the Nuer people, and are important
 socially as well as economically, horticulture is a necessary part of their
 economy owing to the prevalence of cattle diseases and the difficulties of
 obtaining adequate pastures in the dry season. Horticulture and cattle
 herding are, therefore, the two main economic activities, and together they
 determine the ecological cycle, as well as the distribution of population,
 village sites, and also the relationships between the various segments into
 which the Nuer are divided.

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Nuer villages are situated on elevated ground out of reach of the wet
 season floods. In the early rains the cattle feed on young shoots near
 the village hut, as the vegetation becomes too rank and the waters rise,
 the herds have to graze off the short grasses of the village ridges. Dur-
 ing the wet season millet and other grains, vegetables and tobacco are
 grown in the garden situated behind the homesteads. At the end of the
 rains, in November, the floods begin to recede. When the tall, tough
 grasses, which are unsuitable for the cattle to eat, are sufficiently dry
 they are burned. Since some varieties of up shoots a few days later,
 the cattle have fresh pasture until the height of the dry season when the
 water supplies fail in many regions. The Nuer then seek the permanent
 water-courses and dry-season pastures. When the harvests are finished
 they move from the villages to the dry-season camps; a period of wandering
 divides the two periods of stable residence. The dry-season camps are
 situated on the banks of rivers which do not completely dry up or on the
 edge of permanent swamps.

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When the rains begin again in April and May, water and pasture become
 plentiful and a move is made back to the villages above flood level, in
 order to prepare the ground for cultivation.

The annual cycle is approximately set out below. It has considerable
 repercussions on social life and, although local conditions may cause some
 variation, the principles underlying the annual cycle are the same every-
 where in Nuerland.

221

November - December. Youths and girls take cattle to camps while the
 old people remain in the village to harvest the second millet crop. Fish-
 ing camps may be formed on the banks of rivers. When the second harvest
 is finished the cattle are brought back to eat the millet stalks but as the
 pastures become exhausted all eventually go to occupy new cattle camps.
 A period of wandering precedes the final settlement in the camp.

221

361

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January - February. The married people join the youths when they
 settle in the final camping grounds. Camps get larger and larger as
 pastures become scarcer and more people join existing camps. Different
 villages and tribal sections tend to move at about the same time and to
 visit the same pools so that the sites of the main dry-season camps do not
 change from year to year.

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March - April. When the rains begin the old people return to the village for sowing.

June. The rest of the people follow with the cattle. The move from camp to village is direct, whereas in the move from village to camp there is an intervening period of wandering.

The Nuer year is therefore divided into two parts, consisting of a period in the villages and a period in the camp. This annual transhumance is necessary for the very existence of the Nuer. Rinderpest prevents complete dependence on cattle, so that they must have villages on highlands, with gardens, in order to grow the necessary supplies of grain. Climatic conditions prevent complete reliance on cultivation and the need of fresh pastures and water for the cattle forces them into dry-season camps near permanent supplies.

361

Homesteads may be strung out along sandy ridges with gardens at the back and grazing in front and the location and size of the villages depend on the distribution and extent of the higher ground suitable for cultivation. The direction of the dry-season movements are determined by ecological conditions. Transhumance enhances the importance of units larger than the villages which, for economic reasons, cannot easily maintain a self-sufficient isolation as do the Shilluk, Anuk, Acholi and Lango villages where the emphasis is on cultivation.

ECONOMY

The economic importance of cattle to the Nuer

231
262

Economically, cattle are chiefly important for milk and milk products, such as whey and liquid cheese. We are told that the Nuer value their cows according to the amount of milk they give.

Nuer eat meat boiled and roasted but, although they are particularly fond of it, they do not raise cattle for slaughter. It is considered that people ought not to kill cattle solely for food and, except on sacrificial and special occasions with a ritual aspect, the Nuer refrain from doing so. It is even thought that animals killed specifically for food might curse their owners.

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Like other pastoral peoples in East Africa, the Nuer extract blood from the necks of their cattle and use it as a supplementary article of diet in dry season camps. The blood is boiled and taken with porridge as flavoured or is allowed to coagulate into a block which is roasted and then cut in slices.

237

Milk, meat and blood are the food products derived from cattle but the herds also furnish the materials for implements and other necessary articles. Skins are used for sleeping on, for trays, for carrying fuel, making cord for tethering, leather collars for oxen and in making pipes, spears and shields. Tail hairs are used for ornamentation, bones and horns are used for instruments, scrapers and beaters. Cattle dung is used for plastering walls and floors of huts; dried dung is used for fuel and

* when from it are smeared over the body. Cattle urine is used in churning and cheese-making and also for washing. Evans-Pritchard rightly calls the Nuer 'parasites of the cow'. (1) 237

The social importance of cattle among the Nuer

The fact that cattle have more than an economic value may be amply illustrated from the part they play in social life. 251

Relationships with neighbouring tribal groups are partly dependent on the value attached to cattle. The Nuer are contemptuous of those who have no cattle, while they raid those who have in order that they may augment their own herds. A man will defend his cattle to the last and will die for the sake of the herds. Disputes within the Nuer tribe are often about cattle and about the ownership of pastures and water supplies necessary for their well-being. Cattle are paid in compensation for homicide and injury. It is the needs of the cattle which compel the yearly dry-season migration to fresh pastures. [21] [69]

Cattle form the bridewealth of the Nuer, that is, the successive transfers of cattle from the bridegroom's family to that of the bride marking the fact of marriage. Cattle are farmed out among friends as a precaution against the total destruction of a herd by disease; thus they tend to consolidate friendships and to maintain the network of relationships between people within a village and between the inhabitants of separate villages. [59] [72]

Family relationships are expressed in terms of cattle, as are the roles of insect and the status of an individual. Men take 'ox-names' - names which refer to the colour or other peculiarities of their favourite animals. In ritual cattle play an important part; they are sacrificed to the spirits and, when he desires to establish contact with ghosts and spirits, a man runs naked along the back of an animal, invoking the ancestral spirits as he does so. Cows are dedicated to the totemic spirits and the sky spirits. Daily life revolves round the needs of cattle; Nuer think cattle and talk cattle. Oxen are valued for display and prestige, and the merits of their favourite beasts are boasted of by their owners. Nuer language is rich in terms describing the various attributes of cattle. Tassels, decorations and carved tethering posts are made by the women, while the favourites in the herd will be played with, sung to and have poems made up about them. Young men will get boys to lead their favourite on round the village for all to admire and will themselves leap behind it. Among the Nuer there is scarcely any aspect of life into which cattle do not enter and play an important part. Evans-Pritchard writes that the Nuer define all social processes and relationships in terms of cattle and that their social idiom is a bovine idiom. [56] [82] [92]

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940, p. 30.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

SOCIAL UNITS

- 572 1. A single living hut occupied by a wife, her children and, at times, her husband if the family is a polygamous one.
2. The homestead (*gof*) consisting of a huts and huts, and containing a single family group or polygamous family, sometimes with other relatives attached.
- 62/ 3. The hamlet (*dur*) consisting of a cluster of homesteads surrounded by their pastures and cultivations. Each hamlet has its own name and is generally inhabited by close agnatic kinship, often brothers and their families.
- 62/ 4. The village, a very distinct unit, usually referred to as *riang* (ham). The population may be anything from fifty to several hundred. If the village is built on a ridge, homesteads and hamlets may be strung out for a considerable distance. Villages are usually distinct from each other, there being several miles of bush, swamp and grass between them. Well-marked paths, made by the constant visits exchanged by the inhabitants, join the villages to each other.
- 36/ 5. A village consists of a community linked by common residence and by a network of kinship and affinal ties. The inhabitants co-operate in many activities - social, economic and military - and form dry-season camps together. The village is the political unit of Swatland and is the smallest group which is not specifically of a kinship order.⁽¹⁾ People of one village have a strong feeling of solidarity vis à vis people of other villages.
- 62/ 6. The cattle camp (*ser*): early cattle camps may be found wherever there are depressions, pools, and patches of fresh pasture. The location of the larger camps is largely predetermined, as only a few places provide adequate pasture and water at the height of the dry season. The size of the camp depends on these resources and, whereas early camps consist only of a few households, later camps vary from 100 to 1,000 souls. Such concentrations comprise larger or smaller tribal sections and each group has its own separate section of the camping ground. Neighbouring villages participate in a cattle camp, and relatives from distant villages may join their kinsmen. There is more co-operation within a camp than within a village; as the cattle are herded together and milked at the same time, whereas in a village each homestead, in the main, herds its own cattle. A large camp is called after the dominant lineage in it or after the main village community occupying it.
- 63/ 7. The district, "an aggregate of villages and camps which have easy intercommunication".⁽²⁾ It corresponds to a small tribal segment, although it may include a whole tribe or more in the case of very small

(1) Bruce-Fritcher, *The Swat*, 1940, p. 115.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 116.

tribes. The people in a district assembly, conduct feasts, go raiding together, and so forth. 63/

Because in Newland the environmental conditions permit complete autonomy and enclosures of small village units. Pastoral pursuits and the needs determining transhumance cause concentrations of people and co-operation for half the year in dry-season camps, thus creating a wide inter-dependence which is lacking among the Bush and many other tribal groups. 63/

TRIBAL CHARACTERISTICS

Each tribe has a camp, occupies a particular territory and owns and defends its own building sites, pastures and water supplies. Large rivers, or wide stretches of uninhabited country, generally divide adjacent sections of contiguous tribes, and these divisions tend to serve as different directions in the drought. Members of the same tribe have feelings of cohesion and fellowship with each other which do not extend to members of other tribes.⁽¹⁾ The age sets are organized tribally. 619

The tribe is the largest group of which the members habitually combine for raiding and for defensive measures. During the period of military unity, there is a truce to internal disputes. Inter-tribal fighting is fierce but is subject to certain conventions concerning women and children which do not extend to fighting between Bush and Dinka or other neighbours. 619
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Within a tribe compensation (rat) is paid for homicide. This is the (variable) definition of tribal allegiance in every part of Newland.⁽²⁾ Between tribesmen there is also rat - compensation for torts other than homicide. If a man kills or injures a man of another tribe no breach of law is recognized; no obligation is felt to settle the dispute and there is no machinery to do so. 619
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A tribe is a segmented structure in that it consists of a number of small divisions, each occupying a particular part of the tribal territory. There is opposition between these segments as well as a certain co-operation and cohesion. 619

Within each tribe there is a dominant clan and there is a close relationship between the lineage structure of this clan and the various territorial or wote of the tribe. This is of the greatest importance for understanding Bush structure and organization.

Bush tribes have no common organisation or control administration seeking for political unity in the generally accepted sense of the word. Yet adjacent tribes do form a political system and, in spite of inter-tribal opposition, will display a united opposition to different neighbouring groups.

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Heri*, 1940, p. 121.

(2) *Ibid.*

Tribal Organization

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Haar tribes are split into a number of segments. For example, the Lee tribe is organized into Gaa and War primary sections. Gaa primary sections is organized into Banjah and Gashal secondary sections and the Gashal secondary sections into Long and Nyakoon tertiary sections. A tertiary section consists of a number of village communities. The diagram given by Evans-Pritchard to illustrate this tribal organization is reproduced below. (1)

LEE TRIBE

Gaa prim. sect.	War prim. sect.	
Gashal sec. sect.	Banjah sec. sect.	Gashal sec. sect.
Long sec. sect.		
Nyakoon sec. sect.	Long tert. sect.	
	Nyakoon tert. sect.	

All other Haar tribes follow this pattern, although the degree of organization may vary according to the size of the tribal unit. The segments of a tribe have the same characteristics as a tribe, but the smaller the segment the stronger the sentiments of unity. Each segment of a tribe tends to have its own special dry-season pastures. Each segment in its turn has a segmented structure and there is opposition between its parts. Members of any segment unite for war against adjacent segments of the same order and unite with those adjacent segments against larger sections. For example, if there is a fight between War and Gaa primary sections Banjah and Gashal (the secondary segments of Gaa primary segment), will unite against the combined War secondary sections. Each primary section (each comprising all their smaller segments) will unite against another tribe. This principle of organization and the opposition between segments is the same in every section of a tribe and even extends beyond the tribe. (2)

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The Haar distinguish between various types of hostility:

1. *Shur*. Individual duelling.
2. *Ter*. A feud within a tribe where compensation can be made.
3. *Kur*. A fight between tribes where no compensation can be made.
4. *Per*. Raiding Dinka.

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When a man convinces himself to have been wronged there is no court of law to which an appeal may be made. The only method of settlement is by a duel. Boys fight with spiked bracelets; men of the same village or camp

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Haar*, 1940, p. 129.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 143.

with clans. Squares are not used between neighbors lest someone be killed 578 and a blood feud started which will disrupt the community. No third person may intervene in these duels.

In fights between persons of different villages squares are used and every adult male takes part. Fighting occurs mainly between small tribal segments; only occasionally between primary segments or tribes. Feuds cannot occur except within a tribe for it is only in the tribal unit that a breach of law is recognized and the machinery for settlement exists. Between tribes settlement can only be effected by war. 628

THE SETTLEMENT OF A BLOOD FEUD

The slayer seeks sanctuary with the leopard-skin chief who will ritually cleanse him and make a sacrifice to protect him from the vengeance of the spirit of the slaughtered man and his kinsmen. Vengeance is the most binding obligation of paternal kinship. After an interval, negotiations for compensation are begun. In theory 40 to 50 cattle are paid; in practice communities of statement are performed when about 20 have been handed over. The cattle are distributed among the kin of the dead man and a certain number of them are used to secure a wife who will be married in the dead man's name. The leopard-skin chief receives two beasts, and the meat of the sacrifice, but in fact he often gets nothing and may have to help in paying the compensation. He also has the expense of keeping the slayer during the period before settlement. 728

Feuds occurring between small groups are settled quickly, especially those within a village, where ties are so close that ordinary life would be completely disrupted if a blood feud were to continue for any length of time. It is much more difficult to settle a feud between persons of different tribal segments than between persons in the same tribal segment. (1)

Theoretically, all feuds in a tribe can be settled by compensation but this does not always occur in feuds involving primary tribal sections. If people are killed in a large-scale fight, compensation is not always paid nor revenge taken; kinsmen merely wait until the next fight occurs.

A feud arises only between two agnatic kin groups but, owing to the extent of kinship ties and local sentiment, a whole tribal section may support the lineage within it which is at feud with a lineage in another tribal section. The close association between territorial units and kinship units makes the feud an important aspect of inter-segment relationships.

HOSTILITY BETWEEN THE NUR AND DINKA

The Nur and Central Dinka are very similar in culture and organization, but they are ancient enemies and constantly raided each other in the past. The attack was usually made after the rains by the Nur, who would establish a base in Dinka country and spend several weeks there raiding in all directions. The Dinka did not offer much resistance, merely attempting to flee to safety with their cattle. This constant raiding was partly due to lack of resistance, and the advantage of obtaining extra cattle, 721

- 721 group supplies, women and so forth, but it has been suggested that one between the two groups is a structural relationship.⁽¹⁾ The Hurv have incorporated a considerable area of Dinka land into their own territorial and have also absorbed the Dinka population: the result has been fusion and not a class structure.⁽²⁾

THE NATURE OF LAW AMONG THE HURV

The settlement of feuds is effected only when both parties to a dispute are willing to come to an agreement and apply to the leopard-skin chief as mediator. He hears the matter discussed by both sides, and then gives his opinion, which is accepted as a verdict if both parties agree to it. He cannot order a discussion or compel either party to accept a decision. Compensation in cattle, according to a recognized scale, is paid for homicide, adultery, fornication and physical injury.

- 754 Disputes are settled by individuals or groups; it does not appear that any actions are regarded as injurious to the whole community.

- 671 Law is relative to the positions of the parties in the social structure, and to the distance between them in the kinship, lineage, age-sex and political systems. The more widely separated are the two parties to a dispute the weaker is the obligation to settle it and the more difficult the task of enforcing settlement. Unless a man resorts to self-help and is backed by powerful kinsmen and by public opinion, he has little chance of redress. Traditional modes of settling disputes, a recognition of a notion of right (wrong) and the acknowledgment of certain scales of compensation, form the basis of Hurv law.

MIDDLEDIE SERIAL FILMS AMONG THE HURV

The Leopard-Skin Chief (Hamer name)

- 791 He is a sacred person and is believed to have a mystical association
624 with the earth which gives him certain ritual powers to bless or curse it. His acts are mainly of a ritual nature and he has no great political authority, though some importance attaches to him since relations between groups are regulated through him;⁽³⁾ his powers do not, however, normally extend beyond a tribal section. His functions are as follows:-

(a) His intervention is necessary in settling feuds and disputes. Leopard-skin chiefs sometimes prevent fights between two communities by running between the two opposing forces, having up earth here and there. Probably this can only be done when the majority on both sides is unwilling to come to blows.

(b) He performs ritual to cleanse those who have broken incest rules.

(c) He has slight rain-making powers.

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Nur*, 1940, p. 131.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 125.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 126.

Leopard-skin chiefs are usually men from outside lineages and, although they are not all members of the same clan, they are believed to have a kind of kinship through their office. The leopard-skin chief, unlike similar ritual officials in other Nilotic groups, does not represent or symbolize the unity and cohesiveness of any political group.

The Elders

The elders of a local community provide leadership and advice when required. Prestige and influence do not come with age alone, however; a man of outstanding reputation is called *mor* (bull), a term used to refer to men of high social standing who belong to lineages other than those of the dominant clan. A *mor* is head of a family and in charge of a household and a herd of cattle; he has the support of a large number of relatives and, in addition, he must be an able man with personality.

The *got* test is 'the bull of the camp'. He has no defined status or authority but enjoys considerable prestige through a combination of factors - ownership of cattle, age, ritual powers, many children and relatives, personal ability and test, and so forth. His prestige makes his personal actions and decisions influential so that, when he decides to move his household, others will naturally follow suit.

Districts and villages have no leaders or councils. There is not even a war leader except that, in a fight, the warriors automatically follow their most notable and brave fighters. There is thus an absence of legal institutions, official leadership and organized political activity. Evans-Pritchard writes: "their state is an archaic kinship state..." and it is the kinship structure, in conjunction with territorial organization, which forms the basis of their political organization. (1)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUR TRIBAL SEGMENTS AND THE LINEAGE SYSTEM

There are at least 20 clans in Nuerland, together with a number of small lineages of Dinka origin. A Nuer clan is an exogenous group of agnates who trace their descent from a common ancestor. The clans are segmented into lineages and each lineage is further segmented. Thus, a clan is segmented into major lineages, the major lineages are segmented into minor lineages, the minor lineages into minor lineages and minor lineages into minor lineages. A minimal lineage, in the case of the Nuer, consists of a descent group deriving from a great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather. Clans and lineages are distinguished by separate names, ritual symbols and honorific titles.

The political and lineage groups are not identical but there is a certain correspondence. Often they bear the same name; for example, Gower is the name of a tribal area, of the tribesmen inhabiting it and also of the most powerful clan in it. Like the tribe, the Nuer clan has many of the characteristics accompanying segmentation. Lineages are distinct groups only in relation to one another and there is fusion of collateral

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940, p. 181.

6/3 Lineage of the same branch in relation to a collateral branch.⁽¹⁾

6/3 Although these lineages are not corporate, localized communities, they are frequently associated with territorial units.⁽²⁾ Every New village is associated with a lineage, though the members of it are from only a small part of the population. The village community is identified with, and called by the name of, the lineage which forms the agnatic core to which the other families and lineages are aggregated. For everyday purposes the position of this dominant lineage does not appear to be very different from that of the other lineages in the community. It is only in connection with certain ritual matters and in reference to rules of exogamy, that lineages are completely autonomous groups and become clearly differentiated from each other. Lineages function within, and as part of, local communities of all sizes, from the village to the tribe.

THE DOMINANT LINEAGE AND STRANGER LINEAGES

6/3 When a tribal section is called after a lineage it does not follow that all the members of the lineage live there, though the majority may do so. It merely means that the lineage is a dominant one, the nucleus of the community, although large stranger lineages are often included in the area.

Visitation, quarrels, intermarriage and so forth, have caused a dispersion of lineages. If, for some reason, a man or a group of brothers leave their village, they may go and live in the village of a married sister. Here they are regarded as *jirangtha* (in-laws) and their children are regarded as *gast* (children of the mother's brother). The people they join are to them *ring* (cousin - 'the people of my sister's husband'), and *gast* (children of a female agnate). Except for ceremonial purposes, they will enter into close relationships with the dominant lineage of the community. However closely associated lineages may become, a lineage never merges into a different clan, for there are always certain ritual observances which cannot be shared; and only a certain amount of inter-marriage may occur, for otherwise the incest rules would be violated. A lineage can only merge with a collateral lineage of the same clan.

6/4 The close association between lineages and territorial segments, which constitutes the political importance of the clan system, is seen in the correspondence between the segments of a dominant clan and the tribal or territorial segments.⁽³⁾ A certain tribe has a dominant clan associated with it. The maximal lineage of the clan corresponds to the primary sections of the clan; the major lineages correspond to the secondary sections, the minor lineages to the tertiary sections and the minimal lineages are associated with the villages comprising the tertiary sections (see above p.140). The dominant clan is therefore a framework on which the political system of the tribe is built up through a complex series of kinship links.⁽⁴⁾

(1) See Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940, pp.192-3, for full discussion of the segmentation of lineages and underlying structural principles.

(2) Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940, p.203.

(3) *Ibid.*, pp.211-12.

(4) *Ibid.*, pp.203-12 for further details.

DIFFERENTIATION OF STATUS AMONG THE NUR

There are three categories in a Nur tribe: *diel*, *red* and *young*.

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The dominant class is *diel* and members of other classes meeting after the establishment of the dominant lineage are *red* (strangers). The every member of a class lives in a tribe where his class has a superior status; a man in a *diel* (an aristocrat) only in the tribe in which his class is dominant, for the status of *diel* depends from residence on land owned by the class. Privilege, not authority or any particular power, is attached to the class; they are owners of the land, the village sites and pastures. Strangers live on the land through some link with, and the recognition of, the true owners.

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A *red* (stranger) is a Nur who is not a *diel* in the tribe in which he lives. He may be influential, highly respected and even a *red* (chief), though not belonging to the aristocratic class. He may, indeed, group round him an entire village community in spite of the presence of several tribal aristocrats in the same village; in this respect personalities and influence may count for more in everyday local affairs than a particular lineage affiliation.⁽¹⁾ In fact, in the everyday life of a village community, the only socially significant difference between aristocrats and strangers is in the assessment of blood cattle, and this is only found among the *libary* tribes.

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'Tribe leaders', on the other hand, belonging to a lineage of the dominant class of a tribe, are far more important in the political system than the *red* bulls, for they are owners of clusters of kin and are also apotates, each having in relation to the others a structural position in the lineage system of the dominant class.⁽²⁾

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A *diel* adopted into a joint family is a *young* to the people of the family. To people outside the family he is a member of it and his status is not differentiated; he has all the rights and obligations of other members. Only the assessment of his value in blood cattle differentiates him from the Nur.

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Strangers may be attached to the dominant class by adoption or by marriage.

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Kinship values are the strongest sentiments and norms in Nur society, and all social interrelations tend to be expressed in kinship terms. Since there are no headmen or councils or any of the usual forms of government, it means that kinship values, combined with the position of the dominant lineage and its linked stranger lineages, are the originising agencies and the source of unity in each community.

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The political system of the Nur is constituted by the relations between territorial segments in the tribal system; cohesion and organization are achieved through the association of the lineage system with the territorial units. The lines of cleavage tend to coincide, for lineages are

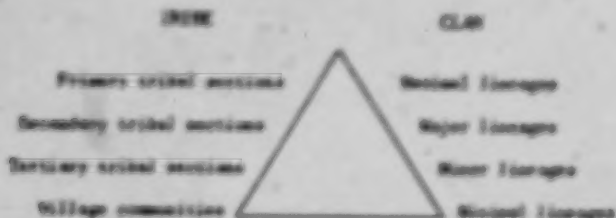
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(1) Gurne-Pritchard, *Kinship and Local Community among the Nur*, 1920, p. 279.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 280.

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not corporate groups but are embedded in local communities through which they function structurally.⁽¹⁾ The tendency towards the co-ordination of territorial and lineage segmentation can be seen in various stages of territorial expansion between the household and the tribe.⁽²⁾



The action and interaction of the various tribal segments and the underlying principles of opposition and fusion are seen in operation when disputes and cases of homicide are dealt with, and in times of feud and war. This acephalous kinship system has a determining influence on the nature of the age sets, on the rules of company, on the character of kinship, on the people, and indeed on every aspect of Nuer life.

NUR NAMES

51/ Every Nuer has a personal or birth name (*rot pang*) which is given without ceremony by the parents shortly after birth; he may have a second personal name given by his maternal grand-parents. In later life, he is addressed as *gon* (father) by the younger generation. In addition, everyone inherits a *rot pang*, an honorific or praise name of the clan of his father, which is used mostly on ceremonial occasions. A man's maternal kin will tend to use the honorific name of the mother's clan.

At initiation a man acquires an *on* name derived from the colour or characteristics of the *on* given him on this occasion by his father. A man is given his *on* name by his age mates in particular. Maidens take *on* names from the bulls calved by the cows they milk, but these are seldom used except at dances.

A dance name, nickname, or traditional name may be used in conjunction with *on* names at dances. In addition a man is often addressed as '*son* of ...' followed by the name of his father. Among maternal relatives the *matronymic* is used instead of the *patronymic* used among paternal kinsmen. A man is called after his elder son by his in-laws, while a woman who has status in her husband's house in virtue of having borne him a child is addressed by the name of her eldest child. A Nuer, therefore, may be addressed by a number of different names or titles. The one actually used on any occasion depends on the age, relationship, and clan of the speaker, and also on the response and mode of behaviour which it is intended to evoke.⁽³⁾

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940, p.240. (2) *Ibid.*, p.240.
(3) Evans-Pritchard, *Uganda Journal*, 1948, Vol.12, No.2, p.166.

AGE-SET ORGANIZATION

INITIATION

Formerly boys were initiated at the age of 14 to 18, each village making its arrangements independently. The ceremony usually takes place after the rains. The officers in charge of initiation sets are in the wet grass (the son of the cattle). He opens the period when initiation may take place, "when the knife is brought out" (age too far) and closes it "when the knife is hung up" (to age again). At the beginning of an initiation period the cattle expert kills a bull, a big dance is held and he makes a speech opening a new period of initiation. In each tribe there is a cattle expert whose authority is acknowledged in matters concerning age-set organization.

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At the initiation ceremony 4 deep cuts are made across the forehead of the boy, extending from ear to ear. After the cutting (gaw) the boys, who suffer great pain, are shut up in a hut for two days. There is a period of confinement (lasting one to two weeks) which is followed by one of wild license. During the whole of this time the initiates must strictly avoid any contact with cattle. Finally, cleansing ceremonies are carried out and a concluding ceremony and dance. After this the youths are recognized as adults and enter into normal adult life and affairs, and into lifelong contact with the herds.

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AGE SETS

All boys initiated during a number of successive years belong to a single age set (*rie*). Until recently there was a four years' interval between the end of one set and the beginning of the next, and this was the period when the son of the cattle hung up his knife and no more initiations were held.

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The age sets are organized independently in each tribe, but it often happens that, when a new set has been started in one tribe, an adjacent tribe will follow suit.⁽¹⁾ A set usually lasts for ten years before being cut and there are generally numbers of six sets alive at any one time. The names of the sets are not uniform for the whole of Nuerland, and they are not repeated. Each age set has two or three subdivisions, each with a separate name. Subdivisions are made up of those initiated together in one year or possibly the combined initiates of two years. All the members of a set are known by the name of the first division. At initiation the individual enters the set in which he will remain for the rest of his life. The members of a set have a common name, equal status, and observe certain patterns of behaviour towards one another and towards members of senior and junior sets (see below p.148).

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The sets are not specifically graded as boys, warriors, and elders, as in some forms of age-set organization; nor have they any political, juridical or military functions. Their importance is of a social nature in that a person's position in the age-set structure determines his social behaviour. Milking and other women's work is forbidden to a youth after

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(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940, p.230.

function; it is only in question of descent and inheritance that the dif-
ference is seen. It is the dead man's name which will survive in
genealogies. 537
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Ghost marriages are arranged on behalf of brother, paternal uncle, maternal uncle and father (i.e. physiological fathers who are not also general). A man of a senior generation is not allowed to marry a wife to the name of a kinsman of a junior generation because the man would be both vicarious husband to the woman and her father-in-law. A man never marries a woman to the name of his father's father or his mother's father since that was the duty of their sons. Only a kinsman takes a wife to the name of a dead man. Occasionally a woman marries a man to the name of a dead kinsman, and the wife so married would cohabit with a stranger to raise up children for the ghost.⁽¹⁾

2. *The Levirate*. When a husband dies, the children his wife may subsequently bear are still counted as the children of the dead man. It is held that the woman should live with one of the dead man's brothers for she was married with the cattle of their herd. Whichever brother the widow does not marry her, she is still the wife of the dead man, and the man with whom she lives merely acts as gaurdian. Children born of the union regard themselves as their father's family and inherit from him and not from their gaurdian. Levirate marriage is different from ghost marriage. In ghost marriage brotherhood is paid and the marriage rites are performed by the vicarious husband; in levirate marriage the husband has already performed these actions and the brother or other male kinsman inheriting the widow merely enters, as pro-husband, a family already in being.⁽²⁾ 537
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Tradition, threat of divorce and social pressure, all persuade a young widow to live with her husband's brother or with a man by a co-wife. She has a certain amount of choice among the relatives available. If she prefers to go and live with lovers and to "give birth in the bush", all children born are counted as those of her dead husband, and his lineage has legal rights over them. Some widows return to their parents' village and live with a man there.

3. *Widow Concubinage*. A widow living with a stranger after the death of her husband, is called a *rob* or *rob* (widow concubine).⁽³⁾ Her lover has no legal rights over her and cannot compel her to stay with him, nor has he any legal control over children born of the union. A man, a widow concubine and their children form a natural, as opposed to a legal, family, and the position of the gaurdian, though precarious, is acknowledged socially in several ways. 587

4. *Unmarried Concubinage*. A child of an unmarried woman has no pater but his gaurdian may become his pater on payment of a fee of 4 to 6 cattle to legitimize him. If the fee is not paid, the child belongs to the mother's lineage, and any man whom the mother cares to live with for the time being is regarded as his foster father. In certain respects the status 848
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(1) Evans-Pritchard, "Some aspects of marriage and the family among the Nuer",

1936, p. 318.

(2) Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, 1936, p. 320.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 325.

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In certain respects the status

517 of an unmarried mother is inferior to that of the mother for whose bride-wealth has been paid,⁽¹⁾ but her position may be equalized at any time by payment of cattle to her lineage.

518 The rules of marriage apply to simple legal marriages and to all other unions. Psychological processes does not appear to be stressed by the Boro, but what is important to them is that the legal percentage of a child should be well established. The various types of unions practiced give rise to various differentiations owing to the class of women which may occur when the legal power of a child is not too great, or too small factor. These differentiations are least likely to arise in the simple legal family where unions and marriages go together and adherence is plain.

537 Adultery is not uncommon and, if it can be proved, the adulterer has to pay a fine of 5 cattle to the husband, except when a child has been born, for it seems that the adulterer has a claim on the child. If a man is caught in the act, he may be executed or castrated.

BRIDOWEALTH

573 Instalments of the bridowalth are handed over by the bridegroom's family to that of the bride, part given with a series of ceremonial acts, until the union is completed by the birth of a child.

The ideal amount of bridowalth consists of 40 head of cattle, and of these 20 go to the father's side of the bride's family and 20 to the mother's side. The actual distribution in any particular marriage approximates as nearly as possible to the ideal distribution.⁽²⁾

The number of animals actually handed over is usually less than 40, but in all cases there is a minimum number without which marriage could not take place. Essential claims are settled at the first bridowalth distribution; those due to the maternal relatives have priority, as they represent a deferred payment standing over from the marriage of the bride's mother. Lengthy arguments take place over the remainder of the animals. Paternal and other kinsmen, whose relationship is not close enough to carry a title to a defined share of the bridowalth, may claim a small gift; the groomer of the bride has a right to a cow if he is not also her legal father.

Bridowalth has two main functions: in the first place it creates new social ties between persons and regulates their relations until these have become assimilated to kinship patterns; secondly, it determines the lineage affiliations of the children of the union.⁽³⁾

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

584 A number of rites are necessary for the conclusion of a marriage, and the sequence of rites is linked with the transfer of cattle; thus, the performance of a given ritual is a recognition that the required number of

(1) Evans-Pritchard, "Some aspects of marriage and the family among the Boro", 1938, p. 129.

(2) Evans-Pritchard, *Africa*, 1971, 1946, p. 349.

(3) Evans-Pritchard, *African Studies*, 11, 4, 1947, p. 181.

cerale has been finished and (1) A marriage which has reached the final 579
stage may be regarded as a final union.

The first step comes when a youth reaches an understanding with a girl and, having some of the necessary cereale, asks her consent to marriage. Both families are consulted and arrangements are made for the betrothal (harong).

When a definite agreement has been reached about betrothal cereale, 535
the wedding ceremony (gati) is held at the bride's homestead. The main features of a wedding are: Discussions about cereale, which are held in the morning; the betrothal near the cereale of the bride's homestead, followed by the wedding dance and the wedding sacrifice in the afternoon and evening. Though this ceremony does not conclude the marriage there is every chance, from this point to the end, that the union will be completed.

The third of the public ceremonies is the one which, at least among the Eastern Bantu, seems to be legally binding. This is the end (kumamama). After it the husband can claim compensation for adultery and the cereale are regarded as marriage cereale and not as a pledge.

Marriage is completed by the birth of a child. Until then the wife 591
stays in a hut at her parents' homestead and she remains with her parents until the child is weaned. The first-born child belongs to the house of his maternal grandparents and even if he is weaned in his father's house he returns to live with them. A boy stays with his maternal grandparents until he is initiated, a girl until she is betrothed. The baby is always brought to the father's house for the ceremony of laying him on the sides of the hearth in the corner of his grandfather's byre, which takes place shortly after birth. 603
352.

After the weaning, the husband builds his wife a hut in his father's 591
homestead. She goes to live with him as a true wife in that she will now with his name and has his children and not those of her father. She makes a hear, a wall fire corner, and the spirit of his lineage comes to dwell there. Later his father tells him to build a byre and gives him a few cows to start a herd. (1)

In-Law Relationships

In-law relationships are marked by certain evidences and displays of respect. 606
Until his first child is born a husband does not openly visit his parents-in-law's village except in some formal capacity. After the birth he makes public visits, but he treats his parents-in-law with great respect and must not eat with them or appear naked before them. When two of these children have been born, a ceremony takes place after which he no longer has to observe these rules and prohibitions. When the father-in-law visits the husband's home and is entertained and given a bull, calf or sheep, his son-in-law may regard him as a father. The only in-law whom a man need not treat with formal respect is his wife's sister. 607

(1) Bruce-Pritchard, Africa, Vol. III, 1948, p. 29.
(2) Bruce-Pritchard, Africa, Vol. III, 1948, p. 40.

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For a man's wife, avoidance is impracticable, but she treats her parents-in-law with great respect and, in the early days of marriage, keeps herself apart from them as much as possible. She is on joking terms with her husband's brothers since, among brothers, the wife of one is, in the social sense, the wife of all.⁽¹⁾

DIVORCE

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If a wife dies childless or if her husband divorces her the bride-match cattle have to be returned. If a child has been born and is left with the husband then the cattle are returned, *supra* etc. If two children have been born, no cattle are returned. Divorce is recognized as having taken place only if cattle are returned; if a wife leaves her husband to live with another man, and her husband does not claim return of the bride-match, any children she may bear are his. Divorce after the birth of a child is very unusual, and after the birth of a second child, almost unknown.

RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

TOTEMISM

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The various Nuer lineages have specific ritual attitudes towards certain natural objects and living creatures. They respect the lion, caprines, birds and plants; some lineages respect rivers and streams too, for all Nuer, rivers are specially associated with the ancestor spirit, *Deb Hacheng*, who is held in reverence by all the people. Some lineages respect cattle with certain markings and therefore do not keep them. The largest clan in Nuerland - the *Gaagambir* of the *Jikany* tribes - respect guards, since, it is said, the ancestor of the clan was found in a guard. In general, however, totems are associated with lineages rather than with clans.

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Nuer totems (*kuoth*) are neither peculiar nor particularly important, and the Nuer themselves state that the majority of the totems come from the *Dinka*; they further maintain that the *kuoth* of Nuer lineages are sky spirits, or spirits of persons who have been killed by lightning and have become sky spirits. The totemic relationship is explained in the myths which tell how ancestors of the lineages and the members of the species related to the lineages, were born twins. A man respects his wife's totem and a woman her husband's, while children respect their mother's totem generally. A totemic relationship of the same type does not prevent marriage.

Respect for a totem consists in refraining from hurting it or eating it; in paying it some recognition and consideration, and in making an expression of regret should it be found dead. In turn the totemic species is expected not to cause any harm to those who respect it. Sacrifices and prayers are made to the totem and cattle are dedicated to it. The species itself is not worshipped although the representatives are

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *loc. cit.*, 1948, No. 2, p. 5.

suspected: it is the spiritual being, the *hauk*, which the totom stands for, which is removed. The totoms are symbols or manifestations of a spirit which can be in communion with men and animals. (1)

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Totom spirits are called *hauk piay* (earth spirits) a category which includes *hauk*; this is in contrast to the much more important *hauk* *ahai*, sky spirit. Yet, although the two categories are thus distinguished, the *hauk* maintain that they worship totom spirits and that these spirits are with god in the sky. The totom seems to be the symbol of the spirit and the spirit to be an aspect of the spirit of the sky which is connected with the various lineages and is symbolized differently in each.

Hauk

In addition to totom spirits, *hauk* also refers to "god in the sky" and can mean any one of the sons of the sky god - the *hauk* *ahai*. Each sky spirit is associated with a certain aspect of nature; for example, *hauk* refers to the rain spirit. Another group of spirits are the *col* *wic* - the spirits of persons who have been killed by lightning and taken up to heaven. Persons supposed to have been taken into heaven by a whistled and those found dead in the bush without any apparent cause are also *col* *wic*. A *col* *wic* is considered to be a sacred spirit of his lineage - a *hauk* *ahai* - and most lineages have at least one of these spirits to whom oars are dedicated. Sometimes a *col* *wic* spirit enters into a member of his family or lineage and, when this happens, the man often becomes sick; on recovery, he makes a shrine in his homestead and becomes a prophet of *col* (*ahai* *col*), and the spirit of lightning contacts the people through him. (2)

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SACRIFICES

Sacrifices play an important part in all ritual practices, and are usually all of a similar nature. An animal is selected and is dedicated to a spirit by rubbing ashes along its back. An invocation is then made and the animal is killed by opening it through the heart. It is cut in two halves when there is a cutting of social ties, and also at mortuary ceremonies when there is one half for the living and another for the dead. Sickness is the most frequent occasion for sacrifices.

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THE CONCEPTS OF *THAK* AND *MUKER*

Thak means 'to respect', and is used in various social contexts; for example, it denotes the behaviour expected of a man towards his parents-in-law; in blood feuds the kin of the slayer and of the slain may not eat from the utensils which the other party has used, and these are respected. In mortuary ceremonies a man's age-mates *thak* the meat which has been sacrificed in his honour. A man also pays respect to his totom. Failure to show respect where there is a *thak* relationship is thought to bring about misfortune. (3) Any serious sickness following the breach of a *thak* taboo is called *nuer*.

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(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Annals of the Anthropological Institute*, 1949, Vol. XIII, p. 247.

(2) Evans-Pritchard, *Ibid.*, 1949, No. 2, p. 9.

(3) *Ibid.*, 1949, No. 96, p. 75.

Cien

753 Cien is the vengeance wrought by a ghost which produces sickness and
775 misfortune; like the other Nilotic tribal groups, the Nuer hold the concept of cien, and believe that ghostly vengeance will fall on those who have wronged a man and allowed him to die with a grudge. Fear of cien tends to make a Nuer more careful to treat others with justice.

[782] To stop the effects of cien it is necessary to make a sacrifice to god in the sky and, when possible, to make reparation.

NUER CURSES AND GHOSTLY VENGEANCE

789 Curses are uttered by someone who has been wronged. The efficacy of a curse is largely conditioned by the relationship of the curser to the cursed. The Nuer regard the curse of a mother or father as serious; it may result in death. The curse of a mother's brother is feared because, being of a different lineage, he may curse cattle, which is the worst of all curses in the eyes of the Nuer. The curse of an eldest child is feared by the mother and maternal uncle.

There are other curses imposed by those of the ric (age-set), by the leopard-skin chief, the man of the cattle and gut, the prophet.⁽¹⁾ The Nuer also believe in conditional curses which may be laid on a man and become operative if he, or any of his descendants, should do a certain thing.

RITUAL PERSONS

791 There are several ritual figures among the Nuer who are important in the village community.

1. *The Leopard-Skin Chiefs.* They have a special relationship with the earth and can affect the welfare of the crops. They also have a limited role in rain-making and in the general regulation of the weather. They conduct the rituals concerned with homicide, with cleansing the parties to incestuous relations, with preventing feuds, and protecting warriors on raiding expeditions.

2. *The Wut Ghok.* Members of certain lineages have hereditary ritual powers in relation to cattle; they are asked to cure cows of various diseases and to ensure the fertility of barren animals. Their role is, however, a more restricted one than that of the leopard-skin chief, who has functions relating to social as well as to natural processes. Usually the wut ghok is a member of a stranger lineage, as is the leopard-skin chief, and this is presumably an advantage when they have to mediate between powerful and antagonistic lineages.

3. *Totemic Experts.* There are a number of totemic experts whose ritual connections with lions, crocodiles, and other dangerous creatures, enable them to influence the beasts' behaviour to the advantage of the community. A totemic specialist is the possessor of the spirit of his totem; he has no political significance.

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Africa*, 1949, IX, p. 289.

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4. *War Specialist.* It is the duty of the war specialist to shake a spear in the face of the enemy and to make an invocation against them. The war specialist is known as the *gwan muot*, the possessor of the spear. He is often a member of a senior lineage of the dominant clan.

5. *Magicians.* The Nuer have a number of leeches, diviners, owners of medicine and fetishes. Only the owners of fetishes obtain any considerable status, and this is because the people are afraid of fetish spirits and believe them to be so powerful that they will even give cattle to purchase them. A fetish owner may become the most influential man in the village, but he holds no special office and does not represent the village in inter-village relationships.

6. *The Gwan Butthi.* Each small lineage has its *gwan butthi* - an official who performs certain ritual services for the family members. He functions at marriages, at mortuary ceremonies, and also performs the task of severing kinship bonds when a marriage is arranged between two very distantly related people; this he does by splitting a gourd in two or cutting a sheep in half.

7. *Prophets.* A prophet is a man possessed by one of the sky spirits or gods whom the Nuer regard as sons of the sky god. (1) Since the Nuer greatly respect and reverence these spirits they fear those possessed by them. Prophets exert a wider influence than any other category of persons in the entire society. Ngundeng was the first prophet (*guk*) to gain great influence by means of his healing powers, prophecies, and prolonged fasts. He led expeditions against the Dinka and, according to his followers, was possessed by the sky god Deng. He built a vast pyramid of earth and ashes with a palisade of ivory tusks. Originally each prophet's influence was confined to a small locality, but at the end of the nineteenth century they began to have a tribal significance and organised the opposition against the Arabs and Europeans. Eventually the power of the more important prophets spread beyond tribal boundaries and they came to represent the unity of a tribe or a number of tribes. This development of the political powers of individuals brought about a structural change; (2) since the sky gods passed into the sons of a prophet after his death it would appear that the hereditary principle was beginning to assert itself. The prophets were eventually suppressed by the Administration. It seems probable that, if this action had not been taken, they would have become divine kings of some sort, perhaps similar to the Shilluk *reth*. In general, the predominant interests of the Nuer in ritual matters are expressed in beliefs of a spiritual rather than a magical nature. Unlike the other Nilotes the Nuer have comparatively few magical practices; even magic coming from the west through Dinkaland tends to be spiritualised by them.

RAIN-MAKING

The Nuer attach little importance to rain-making. Any member of the Gamwar clan can act as rain-maker, since the ancestor of the clan came down from heaven holding a sprig of the *nyot aree* and a small round stone. He has no special political status or any extra prestige.

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940, p. 185.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 189.

✓ 791 In certain parts of Nuerland, land experts and prophets claim to be able to produce rain. In certain areas, the leopard-skin chief acts as rain-maker. The title *gwan pini* (owner of water) is given to any ritual specialist who has powers in connection with rain and floods.

The Tiet

The Nuer distinguish clearly between the prophet (*guk*) and the specialist in magic (*tiet*). The former relies on the sky spirit which possesses and indwells him; the latter relies on various magical substances and actions. The *tiet* has a minor earth spirit, such as a totem spirit. A *tiet* is always a local specialist practising in his own community only, though a magician who possesses powerful magic (*gwan wal*) may become well known and be recognised by a whole district. All these spirits come under the general category of *kwoth* but⁽¹⁾ three main classes may be distinguished:

1. *Guk*. The prophet in whom a sky spirit dwells.
2. *Tiet*. A specialist in magic, acting as leech and diviner.
3. *Gwan Wal*. These are of two types: one using ordinary medicines (*wal*); another using 'talking medicines'; the latter are owners of fetishes, since their medicines are inhabited by earth spirits known as *kulangi*.

The *tiet gweni* (mussel shell diviner) answers questions put to him by throwing mussel shells on the convex surface of a gourd and divining from the positions into which they fall on the ground. Every mussel shell diviner has his *kwoth*, the spirit which assists him in his practice.

[755] The *Tiet Dala* cures headaches, recovers lost property, and performs magic to lessen the watchfulness of those who have stolen cattle so that the true owner may get them back again undetected. He also performs magic to ensure safe journeys and to protect warriors from danger. He possesses love magic. *Tiet ne Ngwet* (or *Tiet Doli*) removes objects placed by a witch in a sick man's body.

There are also various other specialists⁽²⁾ who treat barren women, important men and so forth.

NUER MEDICINES (WAL)

754 Most of the Nuer medicines have been borrowed from neighbouring peoples, especially from the Dinka; the Nuer, however, endow them with spirits.⁽³⁾ The most powerful medicines are *kulangi* (talking medicines). Although the earth spirits in the medicines cannot compete in power with the sky spirits, the people fear the owners of fetishes and respect them. In the past a fetish owner was in great danger of being killed by avengers. He was safe among his fellow villagers, for it was believed that a man would not harm a member of his own kin and community; but if a fetish

(1) Evans-Pritchard, S.N.A., 1935, Vol. XVIII, pt. 1, p. 67.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 70, for fuller details on Nuer magical experts.

(3) *Ibid.*

owner killed a man of another district, he began a feud and was liable to be killed by the kin of his victim. It seems that fetish owners were treated differently in different areas. Many people possess medicines which protect them from fetishes.

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Death may be due to one of three causes: *olia kweth* (a sickness of god), sorcery and the evil eye, or sickness due to fetishes. This last is sudden and may kill a man quickly, whereas a sickness sent by god is usually prolonged. (1) A man believing himself to be ill on account of a fetish summons a fetish owner to discover whose fetish is responsible. When this is known a sacrifice is made to the fetish and its owner is asked to stop it troubling the sick man.

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When a fetish owner dies, his medicines are preserved until his spirit enters into one of his descendants who will then become a fetish owner in his stead. A man may purchase a fetish from another; the medicine is only the habitation of the fetish spirits who exist apart from it. The Nuer believe that a fetish kills someone because its owner dislikes him.

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The Nuer Ghoul

Many of the Nilotic tribes believe in ghouls who feed on the bodies of those recently dead. This belief is found among the Acholi, Anuak, Shilluk, Lango, Dinka and Nuer. The Nuer ghouls are called the *rodh* and is regarded with horror by the people. The practice of ghoulist activities is to some extent hereditary, for the potentiality is found in certain lineages, but a man may become a *rodh* even if he is not a member of such a lineage. Disinterment of the dead is regarded as his most horrible activity.

A *rodh* may be killed by common consent and, although no blood must be spilt, he may be beaten to death with sticks without fear of revenge. This is the only instance among the Nuer of killing which does not demand compensation or vengeance.

LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

In childbirth a woman is attended by a female relative who is herself already a mother. The child's incisor teeth are removed at the age of eight years.

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The birth of twins constitutes a danger to their family; special decorations are worn by the kinsmen, animals are sacrificed, and ritual prohibitions observed. As do other Nilotic groups, the Nuer believe that the parents are safe if the twins are of opposite sexes, for the boy will want to preserve his father and the girl her mother. In spite of the dangers, however, the Nuer are joyful at the birth of twins if they both live. Throughout life, twins are subject to certain ritual observances; before a twin can get married they must both together go through a fictional

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(1) Evans-Pritchard, *S.N.S.*, 1935, p.74.

582 marriage ceremony with partners selected for the purpose, and, in the ceremony, the role of the sexes is reversed.(1)

BURIAL

764 The grave is dug and the corpse buried as quickly as possible and without ceremony. Young people and age-mates of the deceased do not participate. The grave site is at the left-hand side of a man's hut. All ornaments are removed and the body is buried in a flexed position, one arm being placed under the head and the other over it. The body lies on the right side facing west. Graves are not long remembered, and are not places for ritual. When a leopard-skin chief or a wut ghok dies he is buried on a platform and covered with skins.

A few days after death, the gwan buthni, the ritual expert of the lineage, makes a sacrifice and cleanses the people of the homestead. The ghost (jook) is told not to trouble the living. Some believe that spirits live in the sky, others that they continue to live under the earth the same kind of life as they lived when alive.(2)

765 Relatives mourn until the mortuary ceremony which is held several months after death. The purpose of this ceremony, the wocene cuol or cuol woc, is to prevent misfortune which might befall the relatives on account of the death and to cut off the dead from the living.

THE BURUN

000 GENERAL

The Burun inhabit the regions between the White and Blue Niles in the province of Dar Fung. The country is a flat plain, with rocky hills emerging from it. These jebels are in some cases of considerable size and, wherever there is water in or near them, they have settlements on them. The populations of the hills have been considerably affected by foreign influence over a long period of time and, as a consequence, are very mixed. The Burun-speaking peoples may be divided into two groups:

The Northern Burun, comprising the settlements on hills Maiak, Surkum, Jerok, Mufwa, Kurmak, Kudul, Ragreig, Abuldugu, Mughaja, and Tullok;

The Southern Burun, comprising the Meban of the southern plains, the dwellers on hills Ulu and Gerwai and the Junjun on hills Tunya, Terta, Wedaga and along Khor Juhjum.

The following account is a brief summary of the information available on the social organisation, cultural features and ritual beliefs and practices of the Burun-speaking people. Each hill community is treated separately for, according to the authorities, each is entirely independent of the rest. Most of the information available is contained in Evans-Pritchard's article in S.N.R., 1932, Vol.XV, Pt.I.

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Uganda Journal*, 1936, Vol.III, No.3, p.233.
(2) Evans-Pritchard, *African Affairs*, 1949, Vol.48, p.57.

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THE NILOTIC PEOPLE OF THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN

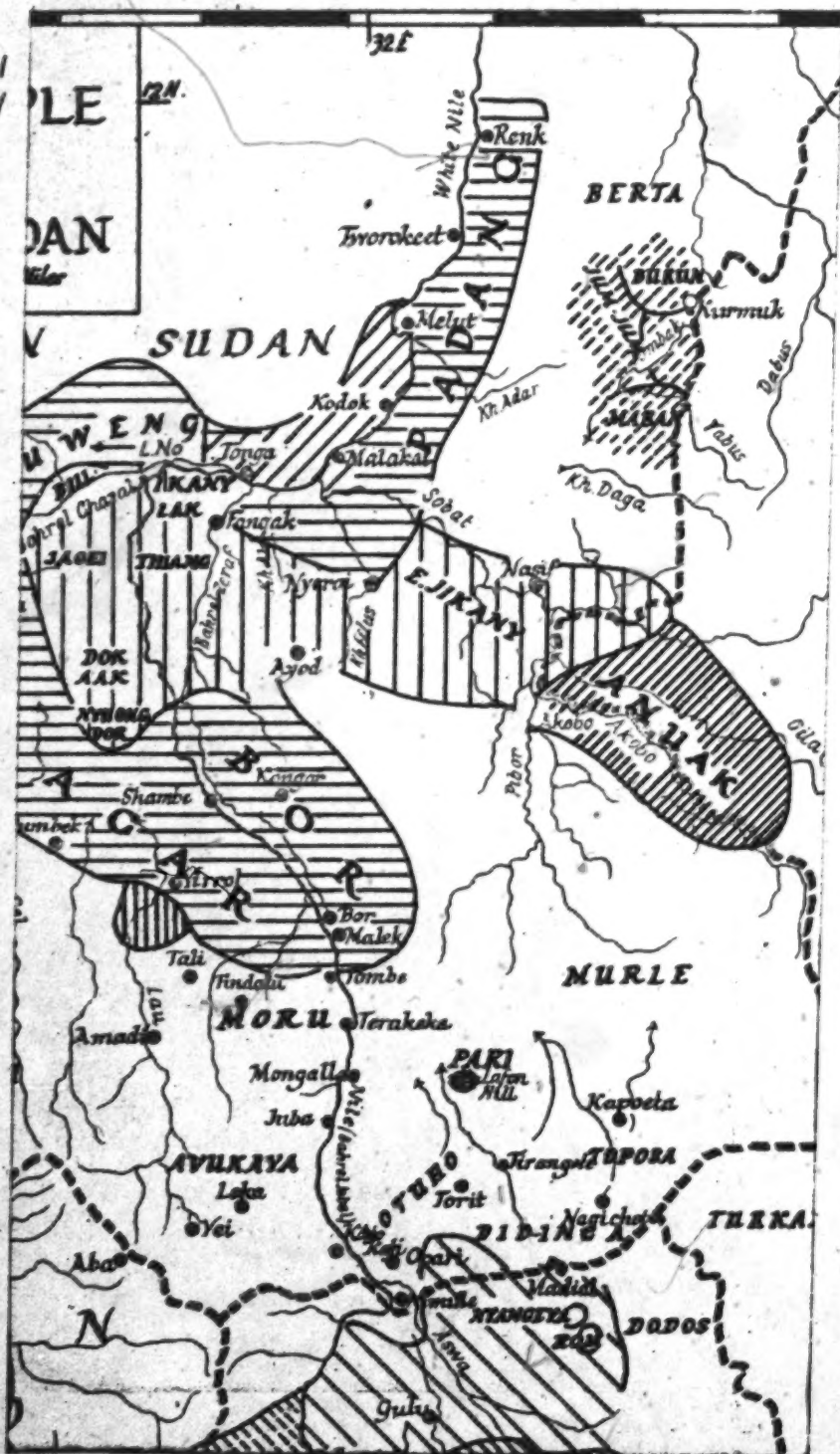
12N.

0 50 100 150 200 Miles



End map A Upper half

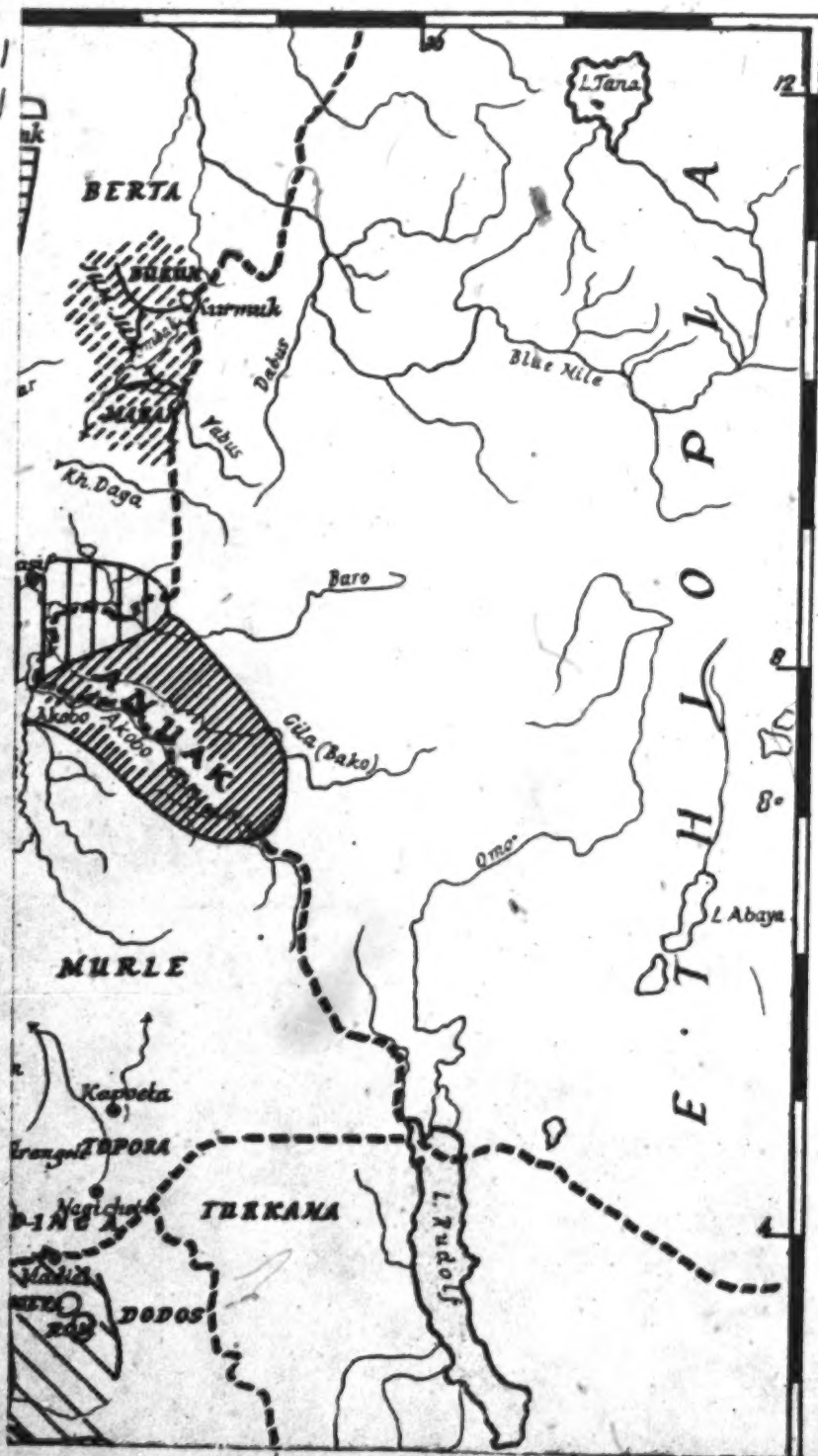
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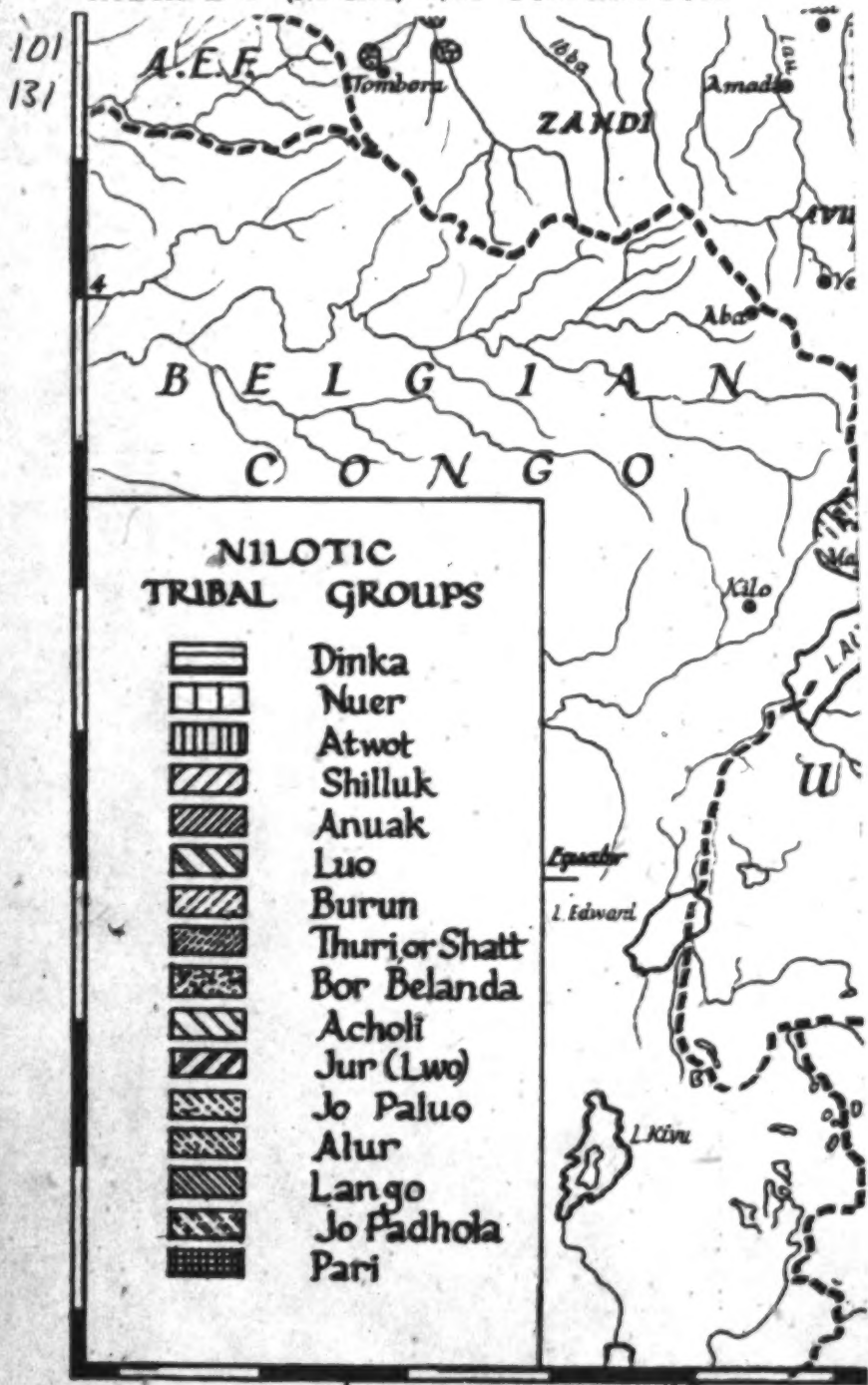
End map B upper half

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End map C upper half



End map P lower half



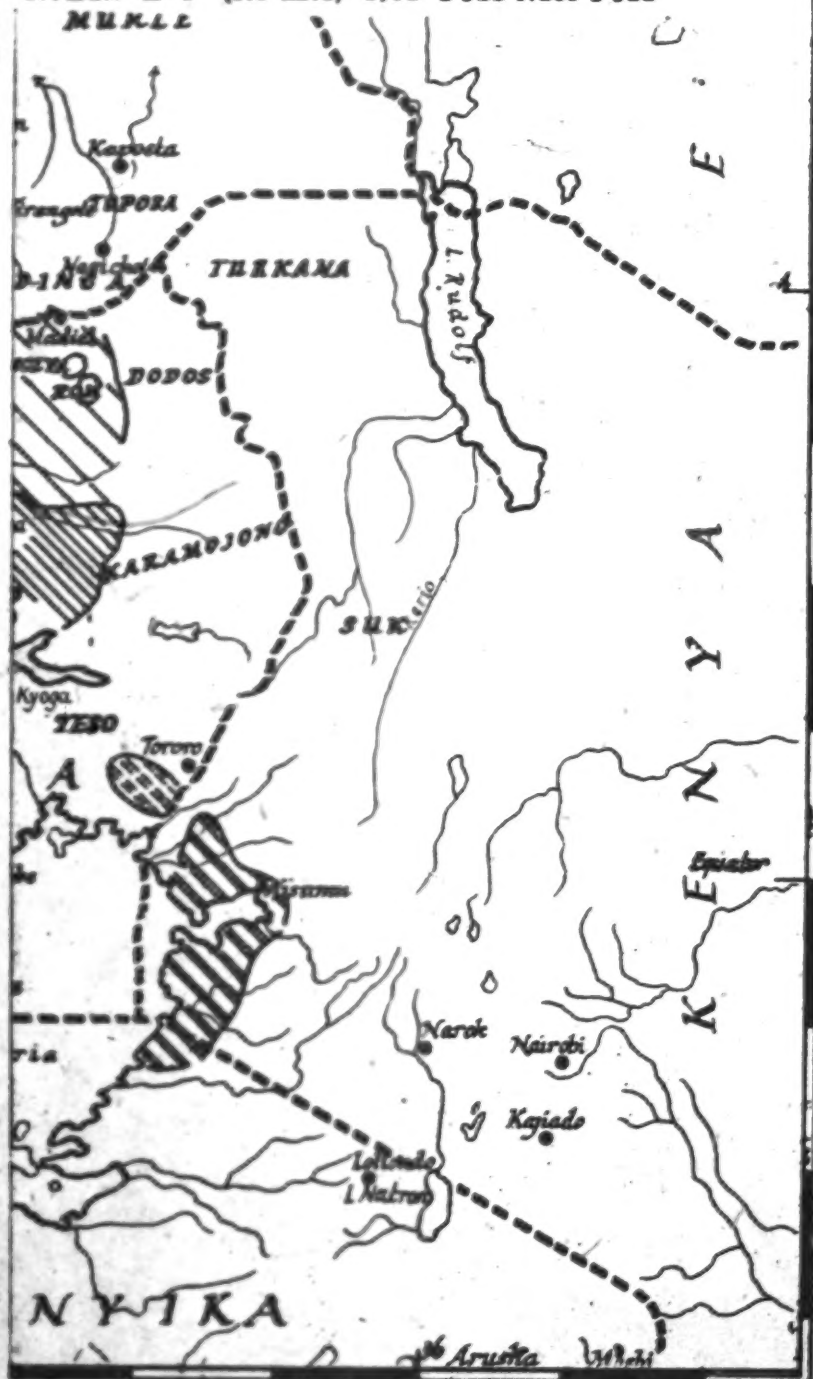
End map $\in$ lower half

15: Butt E-4 (No date) 1952 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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End map F lower half